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Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 54th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 15 January 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. BADRAN

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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 11) (continued) (CRC/C/3/Add.2)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the representative of Bolivia to reply to the questions put to him at the Committee's previous meeting.

2. Mr. SORUCO VILLANUEVA (Bolivia) said that before replying to those questions he would like to add to some of the replies he had already given the previous day.

3. There had been a question on a very important initiative concerning indigenous peoples. In fact, the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean had been established on the basis of a proposal by Bolivia and had its headquarters in La Paz. The aim of the Fund was to provide a mechanism to support self-reliance projects in communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It would formulate policy, determine criteria for funding projects and carry out activities to benefit the indigenous peoples of the region. Its significance lay in its contribution to improving the living conditions of indigenous peoples.

4. The report submitted by Bolivia under article 44 of the Convention (CRC/C/3/Add.2) contained details of equal rights as enshrined in the Bolivian Constitution. The Juvenile Code also had sections dealing with the rights of juveniles in all areas. Progress was being made towards effective and full realization of those rights. A campaign against discrimination against girls in rural areas was under way, backed up by information on the subject provided to mothers and through literacy programmes. It was largely accepted in urban areas, both in schools and at home, that the views of juveniles should be treated with due respect. Youth organizations had played a key role in bringing that about.

5. There had been questions on the definition of the child, in particular about the age of marriage. Under article 44 of the Family Code, males under the age of 16 and females under the age of 14 could not marry, although a judge might grant an exemption on serious and justified grounds. The clearly sexist reasoning behind the higher age limit for males was that it was assumed that the male would be the provider and the head of the household and therefore required greater physical and emotional maturity, whereas the basic role of the female was to carry out domestic chores and to reproduce. Recently, the National Board for Solidarity and Social Development had proposed drafting legislation making the marriage age the same for males and females and had suggested that studies should be carried out on the pattern of marriage in Bolivia.

6. With regard to the question on legislation to ensure that juveniles received fair trials, the section on special protection measures in the report detailed provisions guaranteeing adequate protection for juveniles.

7. In reply to the question on freedom of religion for children, the State considered that it was a matter for parents until the child had reached an age at which he could decide for himself.

8. There had been significant inter-agency cooperation to prevent the sale of children and a commission of legal experts had been considering new legislation to supplement the relevant provisions of the new Juvenile Code.

9. It was true to say that NGOs and the Catholic Church, together with State organizations, needed to improve coordination in matters of common interest to them all concerning children. There was a national programme to that end and the Ten-Year Plan of Action for Women and Children should also facilitate coordination. There was no significant activity by the private sector in that field.

10. Moving on to questions asked at the previous meeting, he noted that Mr. Mombeshora had inquired what percentage of the budget was devoted to primary education, education for disabled children and preventive health care. In 1992, education had accounted for 15.87 per cent of the budget, thus constituting the second most important sector. The main characteristic of the 1992 budget was increased investment in the social sector, with a high proportion being spent on health, housing and sanitation. Specifically, US$ 38.6 million had been allocated to build 160 health centres by 1995 and US$ 49 million had been allocated to the setting-up of a regionalized health service in the period 1992 to 1996. US$ 200,000 had been allocated to the programme of educational reforms and US$ 300,000 to literacy programmes. Public expenditure on education had totalled US$ 509.5 million in 1992, of which 40.75 per cent was externally funded by, inter alia, the European Community, the United Nations Development Programme and Japanese firms. Spending on health care for women and children would rise from US$ 32.8 million in 1992 to US$ 48.6 million in 1993, and similar increases were planned in education and basic sanitation.

11. With regard to the concerns voiced by Mr. Mombeshora about the low indicator for births attended by health professionals, it should be noted that the shortage of trained personnel was by no means the only cause. Others included the high illiteracy rate, low educational standards, the high birth rate and poor nutrition. The Government of Bolivia hoped that by the year 2000 the mortality rate for mothers in child-birth would be below 200 per 100,000. That could be achieved partly through general measures connected with the Ten-Year Plan, such as strengthening the participation of women in health care, increasing awareness of women's rights and improving access to local health care. In addition, prenatal care would be improved, home births promoted and information on family planning disseminated. Thirty-eight per cent of births took place in hospitals and health centres.

12. With regard to the question about the proportion of children in schools in rural areas, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture 80 per cent of children attended basic school and 64 per cent attended intermediate school. There were approximately 800,000 children living in rural areas.

13. Paragraph 181 of the report showed that leisure, recreation and cultural activities were an integral part of the education system. Regional and municipal authorities also organized them. The aim was to inculcate good habits in children, in keeping with the national culture and values.

14. The report acknowledged that there was no comprehensive information available on disabled children. Work had been carried out on identifying the causes for disablement, which included meningitis, lack of oxygen at birth, tuberculosis and Downs syndrome. The report stressed the difficulty in providing care for disabled children. According to international statistics, 10 per cent of the world's population was disabled in some way. Since the population of Bolivia was 6,340,000, it could be assumed that there were some 600,000 disabled persons, of whom 250,000 would be minors. There were, however, 48 centres for disabled children in the country, 4 of which were under State control, the remainder being run by NGOs. There were no data on children with psychiatric problems.

15. As to measures to combat discrimination in education, it should be pointed out that it was not the educational system itself that discriminated, but rather society. The Ten-Year Plan of Action for Women and Children had established basic guidelines aiming to enhance bilingual education, encourage girls between the ages of 10 and 12 to attend school, and reduce drop-outs. There were literacy programmes for women and girls, and teaching materials were being revised to ensure that gender issues were covered in an appropriate way.

16. Mr. Gomes da Costa had asked about child labour and recruitment. Bolivia had ratified ILO Convention No. 138, article 2 of which set 15 as the minimum working age. However, Bolivian legislation put that age at 14. The economic situation in Bolivia, as in all developing countries, was such that children had to work and it was exceptional to find a child under the age of 15 who had not worked. Children who worked were usually self-employed. The Juvenile Code dealt extensively with that issue. NGOs and private bodies contributed to the protection of children in the workplace. In the event of accident or illness, employers were obliged to supply first aid and take the child to a health centre or hospital. Children were not allowed to undertake work that would expose them to moral or physical danger and were prohibited from night work, so they could not, for instance, work underground or in machine shops, handle toxic substances or sell alcohol.

17. Replying to a question by Mrs. Santos Pais, he said that under the new Juvenile Code pregnant adolescent girls were guaranteed free care in State-run hospital centres during the prenatal, delivery and postnatal periods. There was a lack of sexual guidance in general; however, the Ministry of Health guidelines for the National Health Plan provided for sex education, and services in the areas of reproductive health and mental health for all adolescents from 10 to 19 years of age. Concerning contraception, however, the guidelines did not go beyond recommending the use of condoms, for both contraception and the prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases. Unfortunately there was an imbalance between the sex education given to adolescent boys and girls that did not favour young females' control over their own bodies and fertility. The guidelines simply suggested that health personnel should give adolescent girls "recommendations" concerning moral responsibility for sexual conduct, without going into detail. Since moral advice was highly subjective and since there was strong prejudice surrounding adolescent sexuality, especially that of girls, such a suggestion was obviously inappropriate. Health counsellors working with both adults and young people should receive specific training that included the medical,

psychosocial, ethnico-cultural and moral aspects of sexuality. Various NGOs were currently working with young Bolivans in that area.

18. Replying to Mr. Hammarberg's question about violence against children, he said the authorities had established departmental committees for the protection of children's rights, composed of members of the educational community. Such committees already existed in the departments of Potosí, Santa Cruz and La Paz and would soon be extended to the other departments. In addition, the children's departments of the nine departmental capitals were working with the Juveniles Commission of the National Congress on a joint project for abused children, the "Teléfono Azul" (Blue Telephone), which received and dealt with complaints of ill-treatment of children. There was considerable interest in the project among national institutions and NGOs, as a way of overcoming the distressing problem of violence against children.

19. In reply to Mrs. Eufemio's question on mechanisms for follow-up of the Ten-Year Plan, he said that was done through a series of indicators in fields such as health, water, sanitation, education and children in difficult circumstances. Data were not included on women and a few other questions on which the country was not yet sufficiently experienced, but they would be included in the future. In addition, studies and surveys were conducted by the National Department of Statistics on areas of interest that required information not available from the 1992 census.

20. Regarding technical assistance, Bolivia's needs had been stated in early discussions. A priority requirement was the training of human rights personnel; projects were currently being designed for which Bolivia would be seeking assistance from the international community.

21. Regarding Mgr. Bambaren Gastelumendi's question on the right of indigenous children to use their native language, he said that the introduction of juvenile court judges into the Bolivian legal system would lead to better handling of indigenous children in conflict with the law. When the children involved were non-Spanish-speaking, interpreters were used, and social, cultural and linguistic aspects were always considered. He noted that the current bilingual population was larger than in the past due to the democratization of the country, increased access to higher education and the decline in discrimination against indigenous people. The Aymara and Quechua languages were understood by more city-dwellers, and the increase in bilingual teachers in rural areas meant that more indigenous people also spoke Spanish.

22. Mr. MOMBESHORA thanked the representative of Bolivia for his clarifications regarding the financing of the programmes. Although there was obviously great enthusiasm in addressing children's issues in Bolivia, much remained to be done. Since the Ten-Year Plan was being relied on so heavily, he hoped it would be implemented and monitored strictly. Resources were scanty, so much would depend on the support of the international community.

23. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI said that the Ten-Year Plan and other legislation showed that the Government of Bolivia was making a serious effort to improve the situation of children. While he did not doubt the Government's good will, the challenges facing Bolivia in the social sector were enormous

and might exceed the Government's capacity to deal with them, a situation in which Bolivia was not alone. Concerning indigenous people, for example, serious problems persisted. Legislation might show good intentions but fail to be implemented for lack of resources. It was a fact that racial discrimination existed in the Andean countries and that Aymara and Quechua children were at a disadvantage in education and training, had to work from a young age and were often exploited. Therefore the Government should give specific emphasis to the protection of indigenous children against abuse and should provide proper centres for assistance to indigenous children who moved to the cities in adjusting to urban life. He hoped it would be successful in finding the resources to do so.

24. Mrs. EUFEMIO said that the Bolivian report was very comprehensive in its description of projects and programmes in the area of children's rights. Since the Bolivian Government had already established monitoring mechanisms and indicators for its plans, the Committee would expect those indicators to be included in the next report, five years hence, as gauges of the extent to which the plans had been implemented.

25. Mr. HAMMARBERG, referring to a point raised by Mgr. Bambaren Gastelumendi, said that the legislative steps taken by the Bolivian Government were important, but implementing the rights of the child required a supportive attitude on the part of everyone in the country. Sources other than the report indicated that there was a general atmosphere of xenophobia vis-à-vis indigenous people in Bolivia and other countries. That was a form of racism, against which the enactment of legislation was not sufficient. The authorities must take the lead in changing such attitudes. The schools in particular must be enlisted in that undertaking; educational materials and teaching must be adjusted to combat prejudice and violence, and society itself must demonstrate that such attitudes were not acceptable. He acknowledged that steps had already been taken, but the scale of the problems was so broad that further action was needed.

26. The CHAIRMAN invited the representative of Bolivia to reply to items 27-30 of the list of issues.

27. Mr. SORUCO VILLANUEVA (Bolivia) said that much of the material in items 27-30 had already been discussed at previous meetings. With regard to item 27, for example, the new legislation on juveniles laid down rules governing cases of violence, ill-treatment, exploitation and abandonment of children and set forth rules for adoption. The new Juvenile Code also provided a series of measures for the protection of children in conflict with the law. Concerning item 28, he said that the provisions of articles 37 (a), (b) and (c) of the Convention had been largely reproduced in the new Juvenile Code, which established measures for the protection of children deprived of their liberty; he read out several of the relevant provisions. Regarding question 29, he said the Juvenile Code was aimed precisely at eliminating irregular adoptions, as he had explained at a previous meeting.

28. In reply to question 30, he said that one of the most noteworthy programmes in the framework of the project for intercultural and multilingual education was the Bilingual Education Project, whose goal was to begin primary education in the children's native language, with Spanish being introduced as

a second language. The project included the training of bilingual teachers and the production of appropriate teaching materials. The project, which had made it possible to raise school performance substantially, was being conducted in the departments of Potosí, La Paz, Chuquisaca, Oruro and Santa Cruz, and involved 114 schools covering the Guaraní, Aymara and Quechua languages.

29. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS welcomed the trends reflected by the new Juvenile Code, especially the way in which it sought to incorporate the concerns expressed in articles 37 and 40 of the Convention. In practice, however, situations still existed that might affect the enjoyment of those rights. For example, it was stated in paragraph 187 of the report that children under 16 were sometimes detained. She wondered whether it would be possible to institute specific training courses for groups dealing with children in conflict with the law, such as the police, the Church and lawyers, particularly when deprivation of liberty was involved. Secondly, it appeared that for lack of resources, children from 16 to 21 years of age deprived of their liberty were sometimes placed in the same prison premises as adults. In that connection, she drew attention to article 40, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Convention, which hinted at alternative solutions to the traditional institutions for those deprived of liberty. Finally, she was encouraged to note that the new Juvenile Code prohibited incommunicado detention for children. That was a positive step which she hoped to see extended to adults and to other countries. At the same time, she expressed concern that the pre-trial detention period for children might be as long as 45 days, which in her view was excessive.

30. Mr. KOLOSOV said that he would like to know the Bolivian authorities' attitude towards the Convention against Torture. Similarly, what was their attitude towards the general rules for the treatment of juvenile offenders, and what steps had been taken to implement them?

31. Miss MASON noted that the problem of street-children had not received much attention in the report, although she believed that there was a high incidence of that phenomenon in Bolivia. What measures had been taken besides those mentioned in paragraph 192 of the report to assist street-children in the realization of their basic rights? Because of their vulnerable situation, they must inevitably be exposed to a great deal of exploitation. Were statistics available, perhaps aggregated by age, gender and ethnic group, to indicate areas of exploitation of that unfortunate segment of the Bolivian population? She would also like to know whether street-children had been included in the 1992 census.

32. Mr. GOMES DA COSTA commended the Bolivian Government for its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention and for the introduction of the new Juvenile Code, the establishment of institutions for the defence of children's rights, the humanizing of forms of protection for children, the introduction of education in indigenous languages, and the training of persons working with children in general and with disabled children in particular. That represented a considerable achievement in the Latin American region, given the many economic and other difficulties confronting it.

33. Another positive aspect to be noted was the involvement of NGOs in Bolivia as in other Latin American countries, in the elaboration of

legislation and the formulation of public policy relating to children's rights. The contribution of NGOs in terms of political will and technical know-how formed a significant part of their commitment to promote the rights of the child.

34. Referring to article 37 of the Bolivian Penal Code, which provided for the personality of the child to be taken into account when implementing legal provisions, he expressed concern about the subjective nature of such a course. In practice, it tended to open the way for the deprivation of liberty for poor and needy children and those in particularly difficult circumstances, while closing the doors to detention for children in the higher-income sectors of the population. Closely related to that question was the concept, contained in Latin American legislation even prior to the Convention, of the higher interests of the child, which was in theory a form of protection of the child but in practice represented a subjective and discretionary power on the part of the magistrate. That problem was also inherent in article 3 of the Convention, which referred to the "best interests of the child" and raised the question who should interpret what those best interests were. The article should be considered in conjunction with article 12 of the Convention, which made provision for the child to express his or her views. In that context, therefore, he asked whether such subjective consideration of the personality of the child was also inherent in the Juvenile Code.

35. Another question of interest was the right of the child to live with his or her family and community. In that context he asked whether, in addition to juveniles detained under the provisions of the Juvenile Code in cases of violence, children were also interned for reasons of poverty. Lastly, he asked whether the new provisions of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules) had been taken into consideration and whether the possibility of undertaking community service or repairing damage done had been envisaged as an alternative to detention.

36. Mr. SORUCO VILLANUEVA (Bolivia), responding to questions and comments by members of the Committee, said that while much remained to be done in the field of juvenile justice in his country, the fundamental instruments had already come into being. In that respect he drew attention to the new Juvenile Code, which had come into force in December 1992 and was in complete harmony with the Convention. Concerning the Ten-Year Plan of Action for Women and Children, it was evident that projects planned within that framework were closely related to developments in the international situation and to the cooperation made available to his country for their implementation.

37. Referring to the considerable migration from the countryside to the towns in recent years, he drew attention to the Government's policy of alternative development, aimed at encouraging the peasant population to remain in their traditional areas by providing incentives to grow new, cash crops, and in particular to avoid resorting to growing coca. It should be noted that the main cities of Bolivia were situated in areas where there was a high proportion of indigenous inhabitants and that, consequently, indigenous languages were widely used there and the indigenous population was represented in all spheres of public life; the problems which arose, therefore, were not so much related to race as to education and training. His country's subsequent report would reflect the efforts being made by the Government in

that area and would, it was to be hoped, provide more optimistic indicators for the future.

38. While Bolivia had not yet ratified the Convention against Torture, it participated in various meetings at the Centre for Human Rights, and within the country itself national groups were constantly monitoring the human rights situation.

39. Concerning juvenile offenders, the new Juvenile Code was far-reaching and established a series of guarantees for the young people concerned. It also provided for an important role to be played by magistrates exclusively responsible for juvenile offences.

40. On the question of street-children, an active role was being played by NGOs and the Church. Both, together with the Government, had created homes for such children, who either attended State schools or received education within the home itself. In that connection much remained to be done and for that purpose the Government would require international cooperation in order to deal effectively with the problem.

41. Concerning the recent census, it should be noted that the data were still under study and that details would become available in due course. In addition, the Government was undertaking, as a priority measure and with the cooperation of the Spanish Government, a registration exercise in order to obtain data on the health and education of the population. Further statistical information as requested would be made available to the Committee in writing.

42. In response to the comments made by Mrs. Santos Pais concerning articles 37 and 40 of the Convention, he observed that courses and seminars were organized for police officers handling matters concerning juvenile offenders. The necessary steps were also being taken to provide facilities to ensure that juvenile offenders aged between 16 and 21 were no longer held with adult detainees. Lastly, the questions put by Mr. Gomes da Costa would be analysed and answered in writing.

43. Mr. HAMMARBERG expressed concern about the increasing numbers of street-children - an alarming phenomenon in not only Bolivia but other countries also - and whether enough was being done to combat that unacceptable trend. Indeed, the problem called for forceful measures under the leadership of national authorities and with the cooperation of NGOs. Questions relating to sexual abuse and prostitution were particularly relevant in the context of street-children. In that respect, he hoped that the Committee would be provided with a copy of the study being undertaken by the National Board of Solidarity and Social Development when it became available.

44. Mr. KOLOSOV, explaining the reason for his earlier question concerning torture, said that the Committee had received evidence of children being tortured in police stations. However, no evidence had been presented of those responsible being punished. On the question of juvenile offenders, he suggested that it might be useful for the Bolivian authorities to bear in mind the "Beijing Rules" when drawing up further provisions in that area.

45. Mrs. EUFEMIO asked whether information was available on the incidence of situations where male children were victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and whether any future study on the matter was likely to include the situation of male children. Referring to article 39 of the Convention, she asked what measures existed to promote the physical and psychological rehabilitation of children who had been victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

46. Mr. SORUCO VILLANUEVA (Bolivia) confirmed that the Committee would be provided with a copy of the relevant study by the Bolivian authorities when it became avai ble. He pointed out that drug addiction was a relatively recent problem in t country, despite a long tradition of coca production and the existence of tensive coca crops, and that drug-related crimes and violence had not reached the proportions prevailing in some countries. As a response to the emerging problem, rehabilitation centres had been set up in Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and elsewhere in recent years.

47. Concerning the question of allegations of abuse in police stations, there was a clear need to raise awareness among the police personnel concerned and of the need to avoid acts of torture or ill-treatment. The suggestion made by Mr. Kolosov in that respect would be transmitted to his Government.

48. On the question of sexual exploitation and abuse, the lack of any systematic study of the problem had been one of the reasons for the decision for the National Board of Solidarity and Social Development to look into the situation of minors and adolescents in that respect.

49. Mrs. EUFEMIO said that if there were instances of sexual exploitation involving boys, then they should certainly be covered in the study. She would still like to know what arrangements existed to ensure the rehabilitation and social reintegration of child victims of sexual exploitation.

50. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI said that he shared Mr. Hammarberg's concern about child street workers. He would like to know what the Bolivian Government's response had been to the comments on the topic contained in a recent ILO report, which had spoken, for example, of 8 to 12 hours' work a day and wages of barely $14 a month.

51. Mr. SORUCO VILLANUEVA (Bolivia) said that he would try to ensure that the study covered boys as well as girls. Rehabilitation measures were still in embryonic form, and there was not yet any specific policy for concrete action.

52. The comments on street-children contained in the ILO report had been taken into account. Two major ILO projects on the problem were being implemented in Bolivia and other countries. Given the situation of children working in the street, it was difficult to take measures to improve their conditions, for example by establishing minimum wages. Any remedies were usually impracticable and could be counter-productive. It was nevertheless true that the problem required close attention.

53. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to make general closing remarks.

54. Mr. KOLOSOV said it had emerged clearly from the report and the discussion that the Bolivian authorities were aware of the necessary priorities in their social strategy for children. The new Juvenile Code represented a big step forward but there were still areas of concern: the situation of children was never ideal anywhere but in Bolivia it was far from ideal. Discrimination on various grounds had still not been overcome, and Bolivian legislation lagged behind the provisions of the Convention. Much remained to be done, for example, on the definition of the child, where the age 21 criterion appeared undesirable for several reasons. Social support was still not adequate in all cases, and the role of national NGOs in monitoring the Convention should be strengthened. More emphasis should also be given to raising the awareness of the various groups working with children and of the public at large. However, the trend seemed generally positive, and the Committee could expect to read of major improvements in the next report.

55. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS said that the report and the discussion reflected the willingness of the Bolivian Government to use the Convention as a framework for guaranteeing children's rights. The approval of the new Juvenile Code was very encouraging. Although the point of the discussion was to establish what had been done in the two years since Bolivia had ratified the Convention, the representative of Bolivia had been very open about new trends. He had also spoken frankly about what had actually been done, accepting for example that structural adjustment did not absolve the Goverment from its obligations to society and to children in particular.

56. The questions raised in the Committee were also designed to encourage broader acceptance of the philosophy of the Convention as well as changes in legislation. Specific areas requiring attention were the definition of the child, attitudes to the role of girls, the rights of indigenous children, and the treatment of children in penal institutions and under pre-trial detention. Changes in the law were needed, for it was essential to ensure, for example, that girls who married young were not denied the rights accorded to other children.

57. The activities of NGOs in implementing the Convention were encouraging, especially with regard to increased awareness among the public and professional groups. Wider dissemination of information about the Convention was still needed, and she hoped to read of its translation into the indigenous languages in the next report.

58. Mr. GOMES DA COSTA said that the report demonstrated the considerable progress made by the Government, society and NGOs in Bolivia. The new Juvenile Code was the first piece of legislation in Latin America to result from implementation of the Convention.

59. A special source of concern was children deprived of their liberty owing to such factors as poverty or abandonment by their parents; millions of children in Latin America were in that situation. The result was the creation of a category of social prisoners - children whose freedom was removed or limited for reasons other that the commission of a crime. He would like to see some comments on the situation in the next report.

60. Mrs. EUFEMIO said that the Bolivian Government deserved commendation for increasing its budgetary support of the guaranteeing of children's rights, but perhaps the next report could indicate whether that support was yet at an adequate level. An encouraging start had been made with social indicators, especially in health and education, and their use must now be extended to other areas of the protection of children and civil rights and freedoms.

61. Children in especially difficult situations received less attention, simply because they were fewer in number, than children needing education and general support. The study on child victims of sexual exploitation could usefully draw attention to children in such situations and also indicate measures to assist them. Studies might also be made of other difficult situations such as drug abuse. Since resources were limited, perhaps more use could be made of grass-roots volunteers, as in other countries, thereby increasing popular participation in Bolivia's development.

62. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that he endorsed the comments made by Mrs. Santos Pais and other members of the Committee, especially with regard to juvenile justice. He welcomed the answers given by the representative of Bolivia and his promises of additional information. He hoped that the discussion would not stop there, for one of the purposes of the Convention was to stimulate a continuing debate. The summary records of the meetings should be circulated in Bolivia and NGOs should be invited to discuss follow-up action. He hoped that all the plans described in the report and in the discussion would be implemented as far as possible.

63. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI said that he endorsed the comments made by other members of the Committee. He noted that general elections were shortly to be held in Bolivia and hoped that the developments in areas falling under the Committee's mandate would be continued after those elections.

64. The need to harmonize economic and social policy had been emphasized. Given the very hard conditions of life in Bolivia, there was indeed a need for harmonious cooperation between the Church and NGOs to implement the Ten-Year Plan of Action for Women and Children and to secure involvement of other grass-roots organizations.

65. The CHAIRMAN said that the discussion of the report had been interesting and productive thanks largely to the frank cooperation of the representative of Bolivia. The purpose of the discussion was to ensure that more was done for Bolivian children, which was in the interest of the Committee and indeed of the Bolivian Government. She hoped that the many specific areas of concern raised in the Committee would be taken fully into account in future action.

66. Mr. SORUCO VILLANUEVA (Bolivia) said that the discussion had been most instructive. The authorities responsible for social policy would certainly be informed of all the matters raised and would take into account all the suggestions and recommendations. He hoped that the next report would be able to describe substantial improvements in the situation of Bolivian children, for that was something which the Government and all the citizens of Bolivia wanted in the near future.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.